

The Regis School by [vanishingbyler](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Aged-Up Character(s), Alternate Universe - Boarding School, Boarding School, Future AU, Inspired by Toy Soldiers, M/M, Multi, Roommates, Slurs, Trans Character, Trans Male Character, Trans Mike Wheeler, Transphobia, set in 1987

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Relationships: Eleven/Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair, Will Byers & Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

After 12 years and 7 schools, the roommates, teachers, and kids in the classes Mike Wheeler had been in all started to blend together. It'd take somebody pretty fucking special to make an impression.

[Enter Will Byers.]

1. Day 1

Author's Note:

and they were roommates oh my god they were roommates

henlo this is posted like an hour into saturday but i was socialising w my family so im still classing it as successfully posting on friday

heres this bc ive been thinking about toy soldiers A Lot recently and a toy soldiers byler au fucked me up ((will is joey mike is billy i dont make the rules)) so im writing this but like,,, minus the death

basically right now im leaving it open saying there will be multiple chapters on this but it depends how its received lol if i get like one comment like "d_e_l_e_t_y_u_o_r_a_c_c_o_u_n_t" ill probs pretend this was always menna be a oneshot lol

so please PLEASE comment if u actually like this bc im p proud of it and i have more ideAS and its gнна get GAYER and its gнна feature lucas and dustin and max and eleven but if nbody says they wants it i probably womnt write it so like,,, actually say if u like it bc i get So demotivated when i get nowt for a fic i worked rlly hard on

The last thing Mike Wheeler wanted to see when he entered his new bedroom for the first time was a boy, around his age, cross-legged on a bed with a sketchbook open on his lap. He clenched his fists around the handles of his suitcase and guitar and his breath hitched. The boy looked up, his fringe falling into his face. He offered a smile.

“Hey! You must be... Mike, was it? Welcome to Regis! I’m Will, one of your roommates. We also share with Dustin, he’s away on family stuff right now but you’ll meet him soon. We’re both-”

"Jesus, I don't care. I'm supposed to have a single room?"

The kid, Will, looked taken aback. "W-we don't do single rooms. Dustin and I are nice, you don't have to worry about that."

"I'm not worried about that. I can't share. There's rules about it, they were supposed to arrange me my own room."

"Well, you could try the dean, but I don't think you'll get anywhere."

By now, Mike was panicking, his heart racing and his palms beginning to sweat, as images of his previous, *awful* experiences of boarding school flashed through his mind in fiery waves.

"D-do you know where I could find a phone?"

Mike wasn't an asshole. He didn't mean to be short with people, or come off cold. But after 11 years of bullying between 7 different schools, he was past the point of sucking up to people. School, especially private school, *especially* boarding school, was kill or be killed. He'd grown to expect hate, to prepare himself for torrents of verbal and physical abuse wherever he went. What was the point in meeting a new person and acting all pally just for them to turn around in a week's time and call you a perverted tranny with shit for brains? Being rude was a defence- the same as running riot and talking back to teachers. *Hurt them first* was the mantra he lived by.

"I have a cell? It's not a very good one, but the nearest payphone is just off-campus so you won't be allowed out to it just yet."

"Wow, I'm rooming with a rich kid. Shocking." His voice dripped with sarcasm, and he prayed it masked the tremor in his voice.

"I'm not rich. My mom's friend works at Radio Shack and he got it discounted, it was a gift to my mom for when I go away."

"Aww, how sweet."

"Do you wanna borrow it? Maybe if you're just going to be rude I won't bother. I'm just trying to help."

"I never said I wanted help, squirt, I said I wanted a phone. Don't go all holier than thou on me."

"I'm just trying to ease the transition. The first time boarding is hard."

"It's not my first fucking time. I've been boarding since I was 7, just not *here*."

"I'm sorry. You can use the phone."

Mike took the huge device from the kid's hand, marvelling at it. Although his parents weren't exactly strapped for cash, they never bothered with luxuries like cell phones. This was the first one Mike had seen outside of commercials.

Will politely offered to leave the room, and Mike thanked him gratefully.

The call was stressful. What started out as a calm, quietly muttered explanation of the situation, how he was rooming with two straight boys who would most likely eat him alive as soon as he took off the tight elasticated vest holding his chest down, became a shouting match as his mother told him that after being kicked out of six schools, he was lucky to even be at Regis. Her ranting ended when she said "Be grateful you aren't in the girls' dorms!" and Mike hung up the phone angrily, breathing heavily and urging tears not to spill from his eyes.

There was a tentative knock on the door. Mike took a deep breath before calling out a weak "You can come back in."

Will entered and gestured to the space beside Mike, asking silently if he could sit. Mike nodded. The presence of the guy next to him was actually pretty comforting, to know he wasn't alone. That was the

downside to the single bedrooms he'd occupied since 7th grade; they were so, so lonely.

"I'm not going to ask what happened, but if you ever need to talk you can."

"I should probably tell you anyway. You'll find out in a couple hours whether I like it or not."

"You don't have to. People are entitled to secrets."

"I may as well say. I-"

"Mike." Will said sternly, marking the first time Mike had ever heard him not sound soft. "You don't have to tell me."

"I'm transgender. I have a body you'd think would be a girl's. It isn't, I'm a guy but... I don't know, you'll notice as soon as I get dressed for bed so I may as well say it."

"I-I'm sorry you felt pressured to tell me. I wouldn't have commented, I swear. Everyone has secrets."

"It's not a secret by choice. I guess... I guess I'd be fine talking about it, but half the reason I left like three of my schools is because the second straight guys like you find out they either wanna fuck me, or beat me up."

Will snorted slightly, a weak almost-laugh, before his eyes widened and he rushed to apologise.

"It's not funny! I only laughed because I'm not straight. Dustin isn't either. That's a secret too, only 5 people in the whole school know. And even if we were, we're too nice to beat you up. Or make you do anything you don't wanna do. You're a guy, sharing our room, in the guys' dorms. The only reason we'd have a problem with you would be if you were an asshole, which you-"

"Acted like. Before. I'm sorry, I don't like meeting new people, or getting close to them. I was rude when I got here because I figured you'd be like everyone else. You're not, and I'm sorry."

"I figured it'd be something like that. My friend Max was the same when she moved here from Cali, and Lucas. The only person I've ever

met who acted like a ray of sunshine straight away was Dustin. People are defensive. It's okay, but thank you for apologising."

Mike stood up, ambling over to the window to sit on the ledge and light a cigarette. Will gave him a look, but didn't tell him to stop.

Like looked over, deciding to actually take in Will's face now he knew he wasn't a threat. They could maybe even be friends.

Will was lanky. Not tall, by any means, but he wasn't a hobbit. He probably stood around 5'9", shorter than Mike but not inhumanly so. His hair was light brown, fluffy, and parted on the left hand side. He had a fringe that fell just a little into his eyes. The air around him was calm, and still, so different from Mike's own aura. He seemed like the kind of kid that didn't like to cause trouble. His fingers, long and thin, had stains of pencil and charcoal on them, which made sense given the number of sketchbooks piled on his bedside cabinet.

"How long have you been boarding?"

Mike didn't expect the question to leave his lips. He didn't even realise he was thinking of it.

"Since '84. January. I went missing in '83 over Christmas and my mom's anxiety got really bad. She wanted to keep me out of Hawkins so I'd be safe."

Mike blinked, stunned. "Hawkins? Indiana?"

Will looked puzzled. "Yeah? You know it?"

"I'm from there. Dude, how have I never seen you before?"

"I... don't know. When did you start boarding?"

"I was 7. Before then I went to Hawkins Elementary."

"Oh, I was at Edison over in Whitehall. My brother got bullied at Hawkins so she moved us both when I was like 6. I was at the kindergarten in Hawkins."

"I'd get it if you didn't remember me, I mean. Like, 6 year old Mike is so detached from 16 year old Mike. If we ever did meet I'd probably have been in a ruffled pink dress and pigtails. Plus, I was like, *fat* until I was eleven. My face was a circle."

"I was tall for my age until I was 10, and i had this like, monster bowl cut. I looked like a mushroom on stilts."

Mike snorted. "I can't imagine you tall. Maybe I did see you. There was a kid like that on the swingset my first day of kindergarten. My mom didn't let me go over because she said his dad was an asshole."

Will let out a stale laugh, his eyes glossing over with a wave of resentment. "Sounds about right. He was a monumental pile of shit. I honestly wouldn't have gone near his kid, if I wasn't his kid."

"I feel that. I wish I could sell my fuckin' dad."

They went on like that for a while. It only felt like a few minutes but when a knocking sound alerted them to the door, the clock above it said 6pm. Will called for the visitor to open the door, and it swung open to reveal the dean, who he only recognised from pictures in brochures. All school staff merged together after flicking through so many schools in so many different towns, counties, even a different state at one point.

The Dean rushed to apologise for the mistake, explaining that he'd got a phonecall from Mike's mom detailing why he needed his own individual room. He said there was a small room, mostly equipped, that Mike could have in place of this three-bed situation.

Mike looked up at Will. Will looked up at Mike. They locked eye contact, exchanging an entire non-verbal conversation through that single stare. Mike thought of the conversation they'd just had, the secrets he'd shared, the personal stuff Will had confided. He

considered how accepting Will had been from the get go, despite the attitude he was affronted with. He realised, in a way that twisted his heart, that this could possibly be his first *friend* in years.

“It’s alright, Dean Parker. I think sharing with Will might do me some good.”

2. Chapter 2

Notes for the Chapter:

This is kinda short I just wanted to introduce Lucas/Max/El to the mix, the next chapter will actually be them in the basement.

Around 10pm, Mike was picking out chords on his guitar, having set his things out around the bed that was now his.

Will was across the room, on the top bunk of his and Dustin's bed. Once again, the sketch book was open on his lap, a mirror image of how he was sat when Mike first arrived the day before.

Today was Sunday, and Dustin was due to arrive back in the morning. Mike was looking forward to meeting him, as all the stories Will told made him seem great- warm, funny, caring. He sounded like the opposite of anyone Mike had met in any of his previous schools, the type of guy he'd like to be friends with. But on the other hand, he kinda liked it just him and Will. Not to sound cheesy, but he felt connected to Will. Although it had only been one night, Mike slept well. He wasn't scared of his chest being out in front of someone. He wasn't agonising over whether or not he should keep the lights on. He wasn't even plotting ways he could act out so the teachers would expel him. For once, he didn't want to leave a school.

Will was kind. They'd talked for hours about their lives as boarders. He hadn't batted an eyelid as Mike recounted each of the numerous stories of the escapades that got him forced out of six different schools. When he spoke of his shitty father, the emotional abuse inflicted on him and his mother and brother, he didn't try and force Mike to pity him. He also didn't push Mike to say anything about his family. Most beautifully, he didn't ask the age old question about

Mike's "real" name.

During the day today, he'd helped Mike unpack. His clothes were neatly kept in a drawer, with a beautiful hand drawn label that said "Michael's Things". It matched the ones on Dustin's drawer, and Will's own. Mike felt wanted. He felt at home.

The posters above his bed were neatly laid out, Will's artistic eye coming into play. His guitar had a new home beside his bed, propped up by a pile of hardcover sketchbooks that will insisted were full and he didn't mind using them as furniture.

There was a light clanging on the pipes. Will looked over, and pushed himself off the bed with two hands. He landed lightly on his feet, so quietly you wouldn't have realised it if you weren't watching. He grabbed what looked like a drumstick from the window ledge and knocked three times on the radiator. Looking over at Mike, he beamed.

"Wanna meet my friends?"

The two of them rushed to drag on socks and shoes, and Will threw on a hoodie while Mike turned his back to pull on the best that would lie beneath his shirt to stop his chest being obvious. They started to leave the room, when Mike turned back and, as an afterthought, grabbed his packet of cigarettes from the side.

Will shushed him as they snaked their way through the maze of corridors, tiptoeing past the doors of goody-two-shoes students and edging around floorboards notorious for how loudly they creaked.

They exited the building, successfully having woken nobody. A shadowy figure was waiting by the bottom of the huge stone steps.

“Lucas?” Will called, his voice barely above a whisper.

The figure turned. “Hey Wi- Wheeler?”

“Sinclair?”

“You two know each other?”

“He lives on my street.” Lucas turned back towards Mike, “Dude, I’ve not seen you in years. I thought you were at the prep school in Curley?”

“You’re a couple schools behind, I left Curley six months ago. I was at John Adams for a while, but there was this whole *thing* involving getting pushed out a window and giving peanut butter to a kid with a peanut allergy so... Yeah, I’m here now.”

“Shit man. Your mom didn’t mention that at book club.”

Mike snorted. Will glanced around nervously towards to the window they were stood by.

“She calling me Mike yet?”

“Yeah, mostly. I think she forgets sometimes. Holly’s turned into a real drama queen though, every time your mom says Heather she kicks up a fuss.”

Lucas realised his error when the taller boy stiffened, and Will let out a quiet gasp. He cursed under his breath.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to say that.”

“It-it’s cool. Can we just go where we’re going?”

“Sure, I’ll go grab the girls.” He held his hand out to Mike, who

looked confused. "Shake? As a way of making peace."

"You don't have to make peace, I get it. You've known me since I was two."

"I still shouldn't have said it. Even if Will knew it already, you don't wanna hear it. I should've just said 'your old name'." He wiggled his hand a little. "I'm not moving til you shake."

Mike reluctantly shook his hand, feeling guilty for causing Lucas to think he'd done something wrong. Lucas just grinned.

"Sweet, I'll get the girls. Stick with Will, he knows how not to get caught."

"I'm stealthy, like a ninja."

Lucas rolled his eyes. "Shut up, you're not as cool as Harrington."

Will grinned back, and Lucas ran off towards the girls' dorm building. Will took Mike's hand, leading him across the courtyard. Mike realised felt himself blushing, unsure why. For some reason, Will's warm hand was setting him on fire.

They caught up with Lucas about a minute later- he was halfway through scaling a tree that leaned against the side of the girls' building. The lower branches had been severed, presumably to stop the younger kids climbing, but Lucas made light work of it. Two floors up, he edged along a branch to the window, and knocked on. Mike could only assume it was some sort of coded knock, because there was a pattern to it. Three quick raps, followed by one solitary knock, and a further three quick ones. About 30 seconds later, the sash window slid open and Mike released a breath he didn't realise he had been holding.

A girl poked her head out, and Mike took in the sight of her. She had

bright red hair, framing her face like fire. She stood out against the darkness of the night sky, to the point Mike could see the blush on her pale cheeks as a hand came to rest on her shoulder.

“Whaddaya want, Stalker?”

“The guys and I are going to the basement, you and El coming?”

The redhead signed, “Give us a minute.”

Lucas remained on the thick tree branch, straddling it awkwardly. A minute or two of awkward silence later, a backpack was shoved out of the window by a pair of disembodied arms. Lucas took it and slung it around his shoulders, before reaching out to the mysterious hands. He helped out a girl with short, curly hair, pale skin, and limbs that looked as if they’d snap like twigs. She kinda reminded Mike of a pixie. She edged along the branch and climbed over Lucas’s legs. As she began the descent down the tree, Mike realised she was more powerful than she looked. There was so much power in her arms that she almost seemed to glide down, fast and fluid like a bolt of lightning. In just ten seconds, she hopped to the ground beside Will. She offered a gentle hug and a quick smile, but no hello. Will took the initiative.

“El! I’ve not seen you all weekend!”

“Movies with Max.”

Will nodded. “Date weekend?”

“Uh-huh.”

Will turned to Mike. “El is a woman of few words, but she’s worth listening to.”

“Nice to meet you?”

“You too.” She smiled, her eyes glinting. “I’m Jane.”

“Jane? How is El short for J-”

“INCOMING!”

Mike was interrupted by the redhead crash landing to the ground beside them, a leaf caught in her hair. It was obvious she'd decided to jump from the branch two floors up instead of making the effort to climb.

Lucas made it to the base of the tree thirty seconds later, shooting Max a disapproving glare.

"Max, you fuckin' idiot! Are you stupid? You could've broken your damn leg!"

"Max." El piped up, her voice soft and low toned. She shot a cold, but loving, stare that Mike could feel reverberate in his bones, as if some supernatural force was bleeding from her eyes, breaking the very concept of physics. The air felt cold, hard, but it was obvious there was warmth between the two girls, however that may work. "What aren't we?"

"Stupid." Max mumbled, like a chastised child.

"What?"

She sighed. "We're not stupid."

Suddenly, the atmosphere shifted and a sunny smile spread across El's cheeks. She gave Max a quick peck on the cheek before taking her hand and practically skipping off in a different direction. Lucas rolled his eyes and jogged to catch up, slinging an arm round Max's shoulder when he reached them. Mike was somewhat confused, but accepted Will's soft smile as enough explanation for now, and proceeded to walk after the three.

"Where are we going?"

"The basement. It's closed off but there's a weak link in the chain around the entry doors and if you know what you're doing it's pretty fun. There's a kinda den set up down there. Not even teachers bother with it so we basically colonise it after curfew."

"Are we going to get in shit?"

“Nah. Even if Parker figures out someone’s down there he doesn’t really care enough to figure out who. Why? Surely Mr. Badass Wheeler has no fears about getting in trouble?”

“If I get kicked out of this school nowhere else’ll take me- my parents get fined a stupid amount of money and lose custody, maybe of my little sister too.”

“Shit.”

“So if I can keep my head down for the next 18 months, that’s preferable.”

The air between them shifted a little, Mike suddenly feeling exposed. Feelings were hard, and he'd just let a crack form in the walls he'd built around himself. Will didn't say anything, thankfully, but Mike still felt angry at himself for saying too much. They carried on in silence.